Presented by the President Mr. J. Emmonwell

A FUNERAL ORATION.

1053.c15
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OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

General George Washington.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE

Boston Mechanic Association,

AND

Delivered before them, on the 22d of FEB. 1800.

By JOSEPH TUCKERMAN.

Conſulere patriæ, parcere afflictis, ferâ
Cæde abſtinere, tempus atque iræ dare,
Orbi quietem, ſæculo pacem ſuo,
Hæc ſumma virtus, petitur hâc cœlum viâ.

SENECA.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY *MANNING & LORING.*

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1232.

At a Meeting of the Truſtees of the Mechanic Aſſociation, Feb. 22, 1800.

ON Motion, Voted, That the Thanks of the Preſident and Truſtees of this Aſſociation, in behalf of the Mechanic Intereſts of the Town of *Boſton*, be preſented to Mr. JOSEPH TUCKERMAN, for the pathetic, elegant and judicious Oration, commemorative of the ſublime Virtues and pre-eminent Services of the late GENERAL WASHINGTON, delivered by him this Day; and that he be requeſted to furniſh a Copy thereof for the Preſs.

A true Copy of Record, JAMES PHILLIPS, *Sec'ry.*

BOSTON, *February* 24, 1800.

SIR,

WE have the Pleaſure to communicate the following unanimous Vote of the Board of Truſtees of the Mechanic Aſſociation; and to aſſure you of the reſpectful Conſideration with which we have the honor to be,

Your moſt obedient, humble Servants,

JONATHAN HUNNEWELL,
BENJAMIN RUSSELL,
WILLIAM TODD.

Mr. JOSEPH TUCKERMAN.

BOSTON, *February* 24, 1800.

GENTLEMEN,

WITHOUT apology, I preſent to you the Oration written at your requeſt. Its favorable reception demands my gratitude; and I only deſire, that it may be peruſed with that candor, which ſhould ever diſtinguiſh thoſe productions, which derive their principal merit from the ſubject by which they are occaſioned.

I am, Gentlemen,

With great reſpect,

Your humble Servant,

JOSEPH TUCKERMAN.

Mr. JONATHAN HUNNEWELL,
Mr. BENJAMIN RUSSELL,
Mr. WILLIAM TODD.

Mr. President, and
Gentlemen of the Mechanic Association,

WE have assembled to commemorate an event, which will ever be considered as one of the most interesting and melancholy, in the history of our country. An event, which, as it awakens every mournful sensation, should also excite our gratitude to him who is the disposer of all things, and to whose divine interpositions we are indebted for our freedom, sovereignty and independence.

IT is, Gentlemen, perfectly consistent with the character which you have uniformly presented, to meet at this time, in order to pay the last respects to the memory of your departed friend and political

litical father. Many of your intereſt have ſhared with him, the arduous toils in which he was engaged, and by the firmneſs of their conduct, acquired thoſe ſtations, which could be gained only by ſuperior merit. With theſe advantages, you are ſenſible of his worth, and are deſirous of exhibiting the only teſtimony of affection which is now in your power. To this exerciſe you are prompted by the beſt inclinations of your natures; and he who has implanted gratitude in man, and given him a ſpirit to underſtand and to ſupport his rights, will look with an approving ſmile, on this pleaſing and inſtructive duty.

On this day, we have been accuſtomed to indulge the fervor of our love, in celebrating the birth of WASHINGTON. A recollection of the ſervices which he performed, of the dangers to which he was expoſed, and the unparalleled magnanimity which he at all times diſcovered, then ſerved to keep alive the flame of patriotiſm in our breaſts, and conſtantly to render his character more dear to our minds. On this occaſion, every heart exulted, and every tongue proclaimed his praiſe. We reverted to the ſeaſon, when, governed by foreign laws and foreign manners, we exiſted

exiſted only as the tributaries of a nation, to whoſe command our reſources were ſubjected, and by whoſe authority every action was controlled. The powerful contraſt between this condition, and that which was ſecured to us by the firſt of men, called forth the warmeſt effuſions of our ſouls, and induced us to behold him as formed by Heaven, for the accompliſhment of this great and important end. To him, we traced all the happineſs which reſulted from liberty, and all the bleſſings which were attached to a free Conſtitution.

But for the teſtimonials of joy, we now ſubſtitute the badges of grief; and the pleaſure which beamed from every countenance, is exchanged for the gloomineſs of ſorrow. If then it be permitted to regret the loſs of a friend, endeared to us by a ſimilarity of ſentiment; if we may lament a removal of our benefactor, who has interfered in the hour of diſtreſs, and reſcued us from ruin; if we may indulge our reflections on the deprivation of a parent, who has ſacrificed his own, to procure our enjoyment; or rather, who has found his higheſt ſatisfaction in promoting our felicity, it cannot be deemed improper to expreſs our feelings, when death has taken from

us one, in whom all theſe characteriſtics were connected. Let us then endeavor to analyze the life, and to diſplay the merits of our illuſtrious Chief. Theſe are ſo well known, that a relation of them, will only be a recurrence to thoſe impreſſions, which are deeply engraven on the memories of all.

GENERAL WASHINGTON was born on the twenty-ſecond of February, ſeventeen hundred and thirty-two, and was the ſon of a planter, reſiding in the State of Virginia. Under the direction of a private tutor, he imbibed thoſe maxims, which have conſummated his greatneſs, and ſecured for his country an unrivalled reſpect among the nations of the world. His deſire for military attainments, preſented itſelf among the firſt impulſes of his mind. At the early age of fifteen, when youth, accuſtomed only to the domeſtic circle, ſhrinks from the appearance of danger, he had made preparations to enter the marine ſervice in the capacity of a midſhipman. Yielding however to the ſolicitations of a fond mother, he abandoned this favorite intention. Scarce four years had elapſed, before he was again inveſted with the inſignia of a ſoldier; and ſuch were the extent

extent of his views, the richneſs of his invention and the fortitude of his mind, that at twenty-one he was deputed on a commiſſion, which required for its execution the hardihood of a veteran, and the ſkill of an accompliſhed General. His remonſtrances not being attended with the deſired effect, he was ſent to gain by his proweſs, what the force of argument would not produce; and in his conqueſt at Redſtone, he gave a prelude of thoſe abilities, which, but a ſhort time after this, ſaved from deſtruction the ſcattered forces of a Britiſh officer,* whoſe haughty ſpirit diſdained to receive inſtruction from one, ſo much younger than himſelf in the arts of war.

At the eſtabliſhment of peace in ſeventeen hundred and ſixty-three, he retired to his eſtate, to cultivate the milder virtues of private life; and formed that connexion, from which he anticipated his future happineſs. At this time he probably acquired that love of retirement, which appeared ſo conſpicuous through the reſt of his life. In ſeventeen hundred and ſeventy-four, he was a member of the Continental Congreſs; and on the fifteenth of June, '75, was unanimouſly choſen

* General Braddock.

by them, commander in chief of the American armies. The manner in which he performed this duty, through the long and tedious ſpace of eight years, will not require a recital. Or, if any would aſk for evidences, we would point to almoſt every part of our extenſive country. We would aſk him to behold the preſent ſtate of our nation, which, under God, is indebted to his exertions, for the greateſt portion of the reſpectability by which it is diſtinguiſhed.

Among the many inſtances of valor which appear in his life, we might advert to the prudent, yet determined conduct, which preſerved this town from the deſtructive fury of its diſappointed adverſaries. We might call your attention to witneſs the immortal glory which he acquired at York, Trenton, Monmouth and Princeton. But it will be ſufficient at this time to obſerve, that having to regulate, to clothe and to arm an undiſciplined body of men; and not only to contend with the power of his enemies, but with the doubts, the prejudices and the wants of thoſe who had enliſted under his banners, he achieved thoſe wonders, which will ever command the admiration of the world. He was, in effect, the abſolute

ruler

ruler of our nation ; and from his acceptance of the ſupreme command, to his reſignation in ſeventeen hundred and eighty-three, its whole operations were directed by his counſels.

Our rights being ſecured, the neceſſity of eſtabliſhing them on a permanent foundation was ſoon perceived. The diſordered ſtate of our finances, and the derangement of our public affairs urged the immediate performance of this. And in the Convention aſſembled for the purpoſe, WASHINGTON was elected to the Preſidential chair.

In ſeventeen hundred and eighty-nine, he was elevated by his countrymen to the dignity of Preſident of the United States ; and having twice officiated in this capacity, with that wiſdom which was peculiar to himſelf, he again took his leave of public life. He deſcended from the moſt honorable ſtation in which he could be placed by the power of man, to the humble rank of a citizen. I ſay the moſt honorable ſtation, becauſe it was given by the ſuffrages of a free people, who were acquainted with the excellence of his character, and the benefits, which from this ſource had reſulted to his country. His farewell addreſs contains

contains the principles on which his government was founded; and compriſes a ſyſtem of national policy, unexampled in ancient or modern times. An obſervance of its directions will lead to true greatneſs, and furniſh characters like himſelf, to perpetuate our glory and our happineſs.

THE official letters of General WASHINGTON, during our revolutionary war, will be preſerved as a record of the ſtrength of his abilities, the purity of his motives, and the addreſs with which he treated every ſubject connected with his ſtation. They will teach your children the hardſhips which he encountered, the diſcouragements which appeared at every ſtep of his progreſs, and the unſhaken virtue which he exerciſed, even in ſituations, where it could ſcarcely be deemed a crime to deviate. In peruſing theſe, they will contemplate with wonder, his ſoldiers unuſed to war, and wavering through fear at thoſe periods when fortitude was moſt eſſential; and yet, with his aſſiſtance, performing works, which would have reflected honor on troops inured to toil, and accuſtomed to ſucceſs. But they will particularly obſerve his reliance on the Providence of ALMIGHTY GOD, and the firmneſs of his mind, which

proceeded

proceeded from a conſciouſneſs that he was contending only for that freedom, which the GOD of nature intended for his rational offspring. Liberty, and not conqueſt, was the object of his wiſhes; and ſo plainly does this appear, that even calumny has not dared to offer a contradictory inſinuation.

IF we were here to cloſe our retroſpect of the conduct of this wonderful man, poſterity would conſider no additions as neceſſary for the completion of his virtues. As a hero and legiſlator he will ever ſtand ſuperior to competition, and be quoted as a model of all which can dignify the character, and ſecure glorious fame. But if we contemplate him in his retreat, intereſted indeed for the welfare of his country, yet unambitious of preferment; if we view him as acting in the capacity of a common juror; and again, when our privileges were endangered by foreign aggreſſion, conſenting to quit the ſcenes of tranquillity to which he had become ſtrongly attached, and accepting a ſecond ſituation in command, we ſhall acknowledge that he has attained the ſummit of human excellence, and that panegyric is loſt in the mention of his name.

WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON in early life, poſſeſſed a warm and impetuous diſpoſition. This was probably the cauſe, which incited him ſo early to commence that career, which has been ſo honorable to himſelf and ſo productive to his country. But with a heart which was influenced by every tender ſenſibility, he corrected that ardour, which might otherwiſe have produced the moſt unhappy effects. He knew how to mingle ambition with humility; zeal, with prudence; and a love of his country, with a love of mankind. He poſſeſſed the moſt eſſential qualities of the moſt renowned men; and has been ſo wiſe, yet unaffected in every meaſure which he propoſed; ſo regular, yet reſolved in every action, that in a review of his virtues, we know not which moſt to commend. By his unvaried preſence of mind, he ſecured the admiration of the brave, and by his caution, he won their confidence; by the judicioufneſs of his adminiſtration, he acquired the eſteem of that band of patriots over whom he preſided; and by the purity of his life, gained the affection of the good, and the hallowed remembrance of ages yet unborn.

THE character of the beloved hero, whoſe death we deplore, was marked with thoſe traits, which

are rarely to be diſcerned among the conquerors of mankind. Chriſtian benevolence glowed in his heart, and animated his conduct in every ſituation. To be generous, is ever the characteriſtic of a brave man. It is a quality ſo nearly related to true courage, that wherever it cannot be perceived, we pronounce the action to be raſh and unmanly. Every imputation of this kind was avoided, by that ſpirit of humanity, which was mingled with every deliberation. He fought only for the religion and civil rights, which were beſtowed on us by the God whom we ſerved, and uſed no other methods for the acquiſition of theſe, than what were conſiſtent with the end which he propoſed. In paſſing with him through the late conteſt, which terminated in the independence of our country, we may indeed lament, that ſo many fell as victims of deluſion; but we muſt love the heart, which melted with pity for the ſufferings of an adverſary; we muſt venerate the man to whom no one was indifferent, and who poſſeſſed thoſe feelings, which equally recommended him to friends and foes. The trade of war was to him unknown. And that ſyſtematical cruelty, which within a few years has deſolated families, extirpated thouſands from the earth, and immolated

lated on its bloody ſhrine, the innocent mother, with her helpleſs children, was avoided by his mild and pacific temper, which was formed by a love of the religion of the Prince of Peace.

To benevolence ſo refined, he added that humility, without which, greatneſs loſes half its charms. He was never actuated by that pride, which would elevate him above thoſe to whom his ſervices were devoted. But viewing himſelf as one, who, with the reſt was to partake of the ſweets, for which they were mutually laboring, he conſidered no man, however low, as undeſerving of his notice. He poſſeſſed a dignity to which few could riſe; but in him, it was without any mixture of pride. It originated from the harmony of his mind, which gave order to all that he performed. A truly humble ſpirit is equally diſtant from that arrogance, which can contemplate only its own merit; and that meanneſs and puſillanimity, which dares not aſpire to active virtue. In him it was an operating principle, which appeared in all his behavior; and gave to his character that mild, but uniform luſtre, which will continue brilliant, when thoſe, who in idea have embraced the ſubjugation of the world, ſhall be ſunk in darkneſs. To

To a humble mind, he united an equanimity of temper, which enabled him to act with undeviating propriety. Amid the diſorders of a tent, and the confuſion of battle, his thoughts were compoſed, and his commands the reſult of meditation. The greateſt warriors who have appeared, have ſtamped on their names an indelible diſgrace, by ſubmitting to thoſe turbulent paſſions, which a trivial diſappointment has occaſioned. The biography of heroes, is generally a catalogue of crimes. They have legalized murder, to gratify ſome prevailing propenſity. But in him, to whom we are now directing your view, there was diſplayed an uninterrupted regularity. He was calm in reflecting on every action, and unmoved in the hour of danger. And, if we remember the difficulties through which he paſſed, the obſtacles he was obliged to ſurmount, and the unwearied patience which he preſerved, we ſhall without heſitancy, place his morality, among the moſt diſtinguiſhed which has adorned the nature of man.

Such were the virtues which appeared in his life; and they originated from that pure ſource, from whence alone real worth can flow. Of this we have an undeniable teſtimony, in the legacy,

 which,

which, with parental tenderneſs, he has bequeathed to us. Having there connected religion with morality, he has made them indiſpenſable ſupports of political proſperity; and exhorted us not to indulge ſuppoſition, that one can be maintained without the other. Reaſon and experience join to convince us, that religion is the firmeſt cement of civil government; and they who would oppoſe this, are not merely the enemies of one ſtate, or nation, but of mankind. The ancient lawgivers, to enſure the ſucceſs of their ſyſtems, added to them the authority of the gods: And the modern philoſophy, which has been ſubſtituted for the doctrines and precepts of the goſpel, preſents a melancholy inſtance of that depravity, to which thoſe morals are always ſubject, which are not eſtabliſhed by a ſanction, higher than human reſolution. Thus piety was a ſtriking feature of his life. Without this, he might indeed have been a conqueror, and enrolled his name among the murderers of mankind. Without this, he might have attained fame and affluence. But his riches would then have been only new means of corruption, and his reputation ſerve but to extend the curſes which would attend it. Inſtead of this, we behold him, equally an example of

piety

piety and patriotiſm. With a love of his country, which can be compared only to his love of goodneſs, he has reared a fabric, which will continue ſo long as America is a nation; and even when it is decaying with age; when it yields to the ravages of time, will command aſtoniſhment, as magnificence in ruins.

Few are capable of knowing the trials of exalted ſtations. There are many vices, which from our peculiar ſituations we are not able to commit; but when inveſted with power, we have a cloak, under which they may be concealed from the ſight of man. It is the greateſt temptation which we have to withſtand in the preſent life. A love of glory leads to exceſſes, which the ability of gratifying, too frequently affords a ſufficient palliation for the greateſt crimes. But in the whole progreſs, through which we trace the footſteps of him whom we would now commemorate, we can perceive no marks, which lead even to a ſuſpicion of guilt. The malignity of envy has not been able to place a ſpot on his name. In him, we behold one, whom elevation could not bewilder, nor flattery deceive. Who received power, as intruſted to him, for the advantage of thoſe by whom it

was

was beſtowed; and deſired more their peculiar welfare, than his own aggrandizement. We deduce this from evidence the moſt incontrovertible; it is from his conduct; and its truth is ſo ſtrongly impreſſed on our minds, that a relation of it, precludes the neceſſity of proof.

WITH a character ſo ennobled, we have been favored. We mention it, not to boaſt of his ſuperiority, but to excite our gratitude. Surely we cannot recur to the bleſſings, which Providence through him has granted, without feeling thoſe lively emotions, which favors ſo ſignalized ſhould demand. He was the pride of his friends, the glory of his country, and the wonder of the world. By his public virtues, he acquired the admiration both of Europe and America, and the moſt celebrated men of the age have ſought the honor of preſenting their reſpects to him.† By his

† As an atteſtation of this, three evidences may be cited, which are indeed among the moſt ſignalized. Dr. Franklin in his will, bequeathed his gold-headed cane to General WASHINGTON, accompanied with the remark, "If it were a ſceptre, he would deſerve it." He likewiſe received a ſword from the King of Pruſſia, bearing the motto, "From the oldeſt, to the greateſt General in the world." And from the Earl of Buchan, "a Box, made of the oak that ſheltered the great Sir William Wallace after the battle of Falkirk. This box was preſented to the Earl, by the Goldſmiths' company at Edinburgh; but feeling his *unworthineſs* to receive this magnificently ſignificant preſent, obtained leave to make it over to the man in the world, to whom he thought it moſt juſtly due."

his domeſtic qualities, he ſecured the affections of a family, whoſe happineſs was interwoven with his own. He had all which could attach man to exiſtence. His fame had extended as far as civilization, and his name was cheriſhed, wherever virtue was loved. Hail fainted ſhade! Thou now inhabiteſt a happier clime. We would view thee, as among the children of the bleſſed. We would congratulate thee on the poſſeſſion of a crown, which will continue with undiminiſhed brightneſs, when the laurels of the preſent life ſhall fade, and be no longer a teſtimony of diſtinction. Thy name ſhall ever live in the memory of a grateful country, and thine actions be celebrated with increaſing honors. We bid thee farewell.

On this occaſion, we would ſympathize with the unhappy widow, who peculiarly experiences the ſeverity of this divine diſpenſation; and with the moſt ſincere affection, would commend her to him, to whoſe preſence, we truſt, the diſembodied ſpirit of her huſband has now aſcended.

To the officers and ſoldiers of our armies, we would offer him as an example through every part of his life. We would demonſtrate from his actions,

actions, that religion is not incompatible with valor; and urge them to cultivate his virtues, as they would attain his greatneſs.

To all claſſes of men, we would recommend an obedience to the principles which he has preſented, as the beſt method of teſtifying their ſorrow for his loſs; or rather, to yield an obſervance to his injunctions, whom WASHINGTON rejoiced to obey. We have been deprived of one, on whom our reliance was placed without reſerve, Let us endeavor as far as poſſible to repair this loſs, by repoſing the ſame confidence in ADAMS, his illuſtrious ſucceſſor.

It is worthy of remark, that in ſeventeen hundred and ſeventy-ſix, WASHINGTON was intruſted with a dictatorial power. If ambition had been his favorite paſſion, he might now have ſatiated his appetite. It may likewiſe be remembered, that at the cloſe of the war, when the armies were diſbanded and unpaid, that anonymous and inflammatory papers were circulated, to perſuade the ſoldiers to riſe, and to acquire by force, that redreſs, which it was not in the power of Government to beſtow. At this time alſo, he might

might have taken the reins of empire, and made himſelf the monarch of our nation. But he quelled the tumult by his eloquence, and allayed thoſe diſordered feelings, which were ready to burſt on the country juſt reſcued from oppreſſion. The better to diſplay his merits in this reſpect, we might contraſt him with the late invader of Egypt. We might oppoſe that diſpoſition, which preferred the good of others, to his own fame; to that temper, which ſtimulates man to heſitate at no ſacrifice for the accompliſhment of his object, and to conſider power as an excuſe for every crime, which the aſpiring mind may dictate.

ATTEND, then, Warriors, Stateſmen, Citizens! and behold one worthy of your imitation. Equally to be admired in peace and war; equally able to command and to obey. Governed by thoſe eternal principles, which proceeded from the ſource of truth, he had learned to conquer himſelf, before he attempted to ſubdue others. He whoſe military character will form a new epoch in the pages of hiſtory; whoſe wiſdom in deſign, and prudence in action, will vie with the united ſagacity of the moſt celebrated heroes, was a votary of religion. While therefore we indulge

indulge the language of grief; while with drooping hearts and dejected countenances, we pauſe at a remembrance of the loſs we have ſuſtained, let us raiſe our eyes to heaven; and recurring to the bleſſings of which he is participating, anticipate the time when we may dwell with him forever.